The Movement of Adolescents from one Denomination to Another in Lagos Metropolis: Implications for Christian Education

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the movement of adolescents from one church to another in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria with a focus on Baptist church. An attempt was made to determine reasons for the purported movement, by investigating the peculiarities of various Baptist churches within the Chosen Generation Baptist Association. The study employed a sample of 200 respondents. Questionnaires were administered to these individuals, to obtain answers researchquestions guiding the research. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics; simple percentiles based on the frequency of occurrence of the responses to each item of the research instrument. Results revealed that, Baptist adolescents are moving in a significant dimension to other churches, especially non-Baptist churches; Baptist adolescent movement is largely due to their dissatisfaction with the style of worship at their local churches; their parents, teachers or pastors lack of creative and innovative skills in making the things they teach, relevant to their current realities; to mention a few. Recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

1. Introduction

Sociologists, psychologists and behavioural scientists have discussed the positive impacts of social and religiousorganisations in academiaWeber, (1962), Davie (2007), Durkheim (2001) cited in Haron, (2009). The fact that man cannot adequately meet his needs without interacting with his fellow human beings has made it imperative for him to be involved in these organisations. The importance of involving in religious organisations, most especially, has been highlighted in several studies, in the past and in recent times(Corey, 2013; Barrier, 2015; Edmondson, 2016). These include breakthroughs; destruction of generation curses, bareness, delay in marriage etc. and they are being perpetrated by human agents of the devilin all walks of life, on a daily basis. Without adequate protection from the superior powers which religious associations represent therefore, people's progress could be hindered perpetually.

However, it is evident in the literature that religious organisationsdo not focus only on protection; they also involve in delivering people from satanic forces. More importantly, many of them focus on prosperity, humanitarian services, holiness and righteousness etc. This is an indication that the focus Rakodi, (2016) of each religious denomination depends on the mandate which the general overseer of each ministry receives from God, but the choice of denomination and the commitment of memberscould largely depend on denominations where solutions could be sought totheir numerous problems.

Apart from the above, it is obvious that many people would want to associate themselves with denominations that provide comfort zones Johnson, (2014) for worldliness while a few ones would prefer denominations that strictly enforce holiness and righteousness-preconditions for eternity.Thus, it is most likely that many people would migrate from churches that enforce holiness and a righteous living as a life style to other denominations, judging from the prevalent moral decadence in spite of church proliferation in contemporary Nigeria.

Probably, the above scenario could be associated with the Baptist church, one of the foremost mainline and surviving orthodox churches in the country. which has been experiencing the movement of her adolescents and youths to other churches in recent times and it has become a major concern to parents, pastors and other members of the church without any plausible solution. Although, several articles have emerged in academia concerning the escalation of churches in Nigeria without any correlation with moral decency needed to usher in a just society (Ekenna, 2001; Alghalus, 2001; Mfumbusa, 2010; Gbote, and Kgatla, 2014; Omonijo, Uche, Shaibu, Okeke and Akinlola, 2016), but articles on the movement of Christians from one denomination to another, mostly among the Nigerian adolescent and youths have not been sufficiently explored in the literature. The thrust of this paper therefore hinges on discovering: (i) if adolescents are migrating from Baptist Church in a significantnumbers; (ii) denominational destinations of migrated adolescents, (iii) the causative factors for migration.

The study is organized into the following four parts: Introduction, literature review, method of data collection, discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

2. The Concept of Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of marked increase in the physical, intellectual and emotional aspects of a person's life. Adolescence according to Zimmer-Gembeck& Skinner, (2008) cited by Dias, Castillo and Moilanen, (2014, p. 155) is "characterized by the reconfiguration of relationships with peers and family, increased academic stresses, pressures to choose career paths, among other individual challenges". It is a period of life and a timespan in the physical and psychological development of people. In other words, it is a period during which the individual experiences changes internally and externally. These changes are reflected in the way the person thinks and acts.

Eldridge (1995), on the other hand, considers the terms adolescence, youth and teenagers, generally as a period between childhood and adulthood. Aligning with this, King, Furrow & Roth (2004) adds that it is a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. This author also advances that it is a period from puberty toadult status. At this time, there is usually an obvious change in a person's social roles, relationships, and expectations.

The meaning of adolescence, especially with respect to when it ends, remains of varying opinions among scholars. While theorists such as Hollingsworth (1928) and Bandura (1964), argue that human development is a continuous process that is not divided into stages and if adolescence has become a transition period for individuals in the society, then social conditions are responsible, and not some intrinsic aspects of human development, others such as Aleshire (1982), believe that adolescence draws to a close, as a person begins to assume adult responsibilities, such as work, self-support, marriage, or emotional independence from parents. King, *et al.*, (2004), however believes it ends at about age 21 and Hall, cited in King (2004)believes it ends at about 25years. Evidently, most theorists agree that it is a unique stage of marked difference in a person's development.

Graham (2004) in his own study attempted defining adolescence from a historical point of view, noting its Latin origin, "adolescere", meaning 'to grow up'. Comparing it with the term 'adultus', meaning 'to have grown up'; Graham (2004), thus opined that the end of adolescence is the beginning of adulthood.

In congruence with the thoughts of Aleshire (1982), Graham noted that a youth was seen to begin from the onset of puberty till he gets married or becomes 'self-employed'. Hence, youth period depended on when adult status was reached, as shown by marriage or starting self-employment. A youth is, therefore, one between ages 10- 25 while a teenager was regarded as one who was in the middle of the youth period. Furthermore, while Eldridge (1995), considered adolescence a broader term than youth, Graham submitted that it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that the term "adolescence" returned, as psychology began to gain popularity.

This aligns with the thoughts and findings of Hall (1916), who was the first to advance a psychology of adolescence in its own rights. Furthermore, it has been said that psychologists began to use the term again and by this time, "it entered the artistic world" (Graham, 2004:26), wherein artists and artistes made music, dance, drama and art portraying adolescence with a young person in her mid-teens. Over time, "adolescence became more narrowly used and defined as the teen years and has continued to be used in this way for the last hundred years" (p. 26 of the above).

2.1 Characteristics of Adolescents

A person's characteristic has been defined by the 8th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary (2010, p. 234) as "a typical feature or quality of something or someone". Also, it could be described as peculiar traits of a person. Adolescent characteristics are therefore those traits that differentiate the period of adolescence from other stages in life span development.

Havighurst (1972) propounded the concept of 'developmental tasks', to represent the features of various stages in lifespan development. Havighurst, (1972:6), cited by Sugarman (2001) stated that developmental tasks of life are 'those things that constitute healthy and satisfactory growth in our society." He argued further that 'developmental task' is a notion of stages in development that focus on those things people learn at a particular stage in their life cycle, that if they do not, they are judged by others as been unsuccessful.

Kaplan (2004) also argued that there are key developmental changes that nearly all adolescents experience during their transition from childhood to adulthood. This implies that even though there may be slight variations in the developmental traits that characterize adolescents, differentiating them from their peers, the obvious changes can be largely applied. Campo (2012:1), agrees with this, stating that "Teenagers are individuals with unique personalities and special interests, likes and dislikes. In general, however, there are series of developmental tasks that they all face during the adolescent years".

Sugarman (2001) further citing Havighurst (1972), posited that a person's development is "culture-bound", hence value-laden and that the developmental task concept results from "three interactive sources: physical maturation, the cultural pressures of a society and personal goal, the desires aspirations and values of the emerging personality...; more often than not, developmental tasks arise from the combination of these factors acting together". Perkins (2006:1) corroborates this, arguing that "a developmental task represents our culture's definition of "normal" development -at

different points in the lifespan". This suggests that it is the general way a society judges developmental changes to occur that makes them accept an adolescent as normal or otherwise.

In his article on Normal Adolescence, Ingersoll, 2013, captured Havighurst's eleven developmental tasks of adolescents, these are enumerated below. These developmental tasks reveal the characteristics of several areas of an adolescents' life and they align with the thoughts of several scholars such as American Psychological Association (APA), 2002; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2007), Campo (2012) and Ingersoll (2013). However, an attempt was made to describe these characteristics under three stages; early, middle and late adolescence.

2.1.1 Early adolescence Stage
Early adolescence begins with a struggle with a sense of identity (Campo, 2012). At this stage, they are struggling with whether they are still children or are now adults. Hence, they make their first attempt to leave the dependent, secured role of a child and to establish themselves as unique individuals, independent of their parents (Ingersoll, 2013). Due to the rapid physical growth experienced at this stage, young people tend to be more focused not only on their self-concept but also on their physical appearance and acceptabilityIngersoll, (2013) to the world.

This quest for acceptability tends to make them seek conformity with peers an experience that tends to draw them far from their parents and sometimes is the root cause of child-parent conflicts. They show-off qualities, have greater interest in privacy, practice experimentation with body (masturbation), they worry about being normal, engage in rule and limit-testing(Ingersoll, 2013).

2.1.2 Middle Adolescence Stage
Middle adolescence however, has been noted to be characterised by the close of pubertal signs, a greater demonstration of abstract thinking, better able to set goals for themselves and make their own decisions, with minimal influence from peers. Their endearment to peers is more towards the opposite sex and they tend to increase in independence from parents. Much of their psychological tendencies are directed towards preparing for adult roles and making preliminary decisions about vocational goals (Ibid). Also at this stage, adolescents grow greater interests in moral reasoning (Campo, 2012), and are developing a sense of behavioural maturity, learning to control their impulsiveness (Ingersoll, 2013).

2.1.3 Late AdolescenceStage
Late adolescence, hovers around ages 19-24 years, is however characterised by fully developed physical features, portraying man/ womanliness. They attempt to establish a sense of personal identity; greater emotional stability; greater concern for the future, developing more serious relationships and are more careful in decision making. At this stage, adolescents' need for peer approval isgreatly diminished and they are largely psychologically independent from their parents (Ibid).

While all these characteristics indeed depict adolescence, capturing their physical, mental, emotional, socio-moral aspects, they are limited in that they do not capture the spiritual development of the adolescents. Eldridge (1995) however observed that most of the physical changes that occur in adolescence, affect not only their mental, emotional, social dimensions, but also the spiritual. Perhaps due to their increased sense of reasoning, adolescents tend to ask questions about God and seek ways to know Him and possibly build relationship with him.

Eldridge (1995)went on to give a list of the spiritual characteristics identifiable in a typical adolescent which could help to predict their religious behaviour. From as far back as 60s, it has been noted that the period of adolescence is an age of religious awakening, wherein they consider religion important because it provides a form of "certainty and security not provided in other areas" (Hurlock, 1967:390). Religion is also important to the adolescent because it "provides opportunities to enter into meaningful relationships with others in which he can share a common devotion" (Ibid).

Taylor (2001:94) however advised that when considering the spiritual formation of teens and preteens, it is essential to help them through this passage with both grace and truth. Teenagers may

reject "institutional religion" but be quite open to spirituality in a general sense. Spiritual formation with adolescence also has much to do with empowering them to integrate Christianity into their everyday lives. Therefore, it could be summarized that the period of adolescence is marked by dynamism adventure and quest for discovery

2.2 Adolescents' Religious Interests

One of the major concerns of parents, pastors and other religious leaders, is usually how to develop and sustain religious interests in adolescents, as they characteristically seek autonomy at this stage. They want to choose for themselves in every aspect, including whether to continue with the religion of their parents or do otherwise. Dollahite and Thatcher (2008), in their study opined that adolescents are embedded in an increasingly complex circle of influence including peers, school, media and very significantly, the western culture of individualism. This implies that apart from their innate tendencies to be independent, the western culture of individuality also gives them a sense of religious independence and a right to make their own religious decisions. To this end, reviews in adolescent religiosity become handy for the current discourse, as scholarly debates abound as to whether adolescents are concerned about religion or not.

Adolescents are interested in religion (Hurlock 1967, Smith, Denton &Regnerus, 2003, Cnaan, Gelles&Sinha, 2004). Issues of faith, beliefs and practices, are important aspects of their lives (Bridges & Moore, 2002). This is contrary to the opinion of some scholars in the past which held that modern generation of adolescents was going to the dogs basically because religion plays only a minor role in their lives (Leslie& Richardson in Hurlock, 1967). In other words, the level of moral decadence and exuberance observed in modern adolescents was traced to their lack of interest in God and things that have to do with Him. This position was corroborated by results from a national study on youth and religion, wherein it was stated that a common assumption among both clergy and scholars is that the time between the end of childhood and the beginning of childbearing is the least religious period of a person's life (Ibid). Rather than an assumption, indeed some researchers have found a general age trend for religiosity to decline from childhood through adolescence (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1989; King, Elder, &Whitbeck, 1997).

Smith and Denton (2005) carried out an extensive national study of adolescent religiosity and found religion to be an important aspect of life for adolescents. They found that 51% of the adolescents claimed that religion was extremely important in shaping their daily lives. 55% declared that they had made personal commitment to live their lives for God. However, a large minority claimed they attended church at least once a week and 38% were currently involved in a religious youth group. In the same vein, Pearce and Denton (2011) for example argued that teenagers are interested in religion, but they often want to "do religion" in their own way and not following institutional structures. This conclusion, they drew from their research through the National Study of Youth and Religion, 2002, where they surveyed 2,530 young people, within ages 16 and 21years.

Apparently from the foregoing, adolescents are religious. For the stage of life they find themselves, there could be a display of truancy, lack of commitment to their faith, as in childhood, and generally low participation in religious activities, nevertheless they still believe in God and know that He is supreme (Dudley, 2000) and contrary to the opinion of some scholars earlier cited, religion has been found to be a significant protective resource against many types of maladaptive adjustment outcomes among adolescent samples (Ball, Armistead & Austin, 2003). Saroglou (2012) also concludes that adolescent religiosity is linked with many positive individual and social outcomes.

2.3 Adolescent Movement from the Church

World Health Organisation, (2015, p. 1) identifies "adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood(from ages 10 to19). It represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change

that is second only to that of infancy". It is a time of individuation and development of one's own identity, values and beliefs. It could also be regarded as a time of exploration and risk taking. However, a strong aspect of this exploration that is very crucial in recent times is schism and the movement of adolescents and youths from one church to another. Over the years in both scholastic and theological spheres, there has been a growing concern for reasons why adolescent move from the church, whether to other churches different from their family churches or from the Christian faith completely. This study was conducted to examine this problem in the Baptist church, Lagos state.

3. Method of Data Collection
3.1 Research Design

This research engaged descriptive survey method. It is a method which gathers information about a subject matter, by making use of the actual situation in a targeted population.

3.2 Population of the Study and Sample Size

Adolescents, between the age of 12 and 25as well as parents, teachers and pastors of the Chosen Generation Baptist Association, Lagos, represented the population of this study(Adeniji, 2015). Out of this number, a sample of 200 respondents was selected for the study.

3.3 Denomination under Study

The Baptist denomination is a Christian Religious body that seeks to uphold all Christian tenet traditions, beliefs and doctrines passed down from Jesus Christ through the apostles and early church fathers. It treasures the Bible as the authority on which its teachings and styles of ministry are based. Its education ministry is founded on God's instruction to the family heads of Israel, through Moses as presented in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, traditionally known as the Hebrew "Shema":

The Baptist church through its various education units, (Sunday School, Discipleship, Literacy and Church Training, etc.) and Missionary Organizations (Women Missionary Union, WMU, Men Missionary Union, MMU, Youth Organizations), attempts to nurture individuals in the church from cradle to the grave. This structure not only provides an opportunity for adolescents, who fall under the categories of Girls' Auxiliary (G.A), Royal Ambassadors (R.A), Lydia Auxiliary, Baptist Students' Fellowship (BSF) and Youth Fellowship, to be spiritually nourished, but also creates a platform for social interactions, through camps, competitions, retreats, workshops and conferences, where they pray, work, play, have fun and meet new friends.

3.4 Sampling Technique

There are twentyBaptist Churches in the Chosen Generation Baptist Association (Adeniji,2015), out of which eight of them were selected by random sampling. A proportional sample technique was used to select sample from each church. Thus, respondents were selected from each church based on its population.

3.5 Research Instrument

The instrument for this research was a questionnaire. Two hundred copies of questionnaires; hundred for each of the two sets of respondents (Adolescents and Christian Educators) were produced to help gather information on knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, facts, and other information, as recommended by Radhakrishna (2007). These questionnaires contained a set of systematically structured questions that could aid the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The questionnaire for the adolescents was titled "Youth Questionnaire on Adolescent Migration from Baptist Churches (YQAMBC)"; containing two sections. The first (Section A) which had five questions based on respondents personal data and the second (Section B), had five questions, to help find out whether or not adolescents are migrating from Baptist churches, if yes, where are they moving :

to; whether Christian Education had any roles to play and if they do, suggestion on such roles and how to help reduce such movement to the barest minimum.

The Christian Educators questionnaire, which was titled "Pastors, Teachers and Parents Questionnaire on Adolescents Migration from Baptist Churches (PTPQAMBC)", also, had two sections, A and B. Each section had a set of seven questions to obtain both the personal data of the respondents and other information as in section B of that of the youths, as described earlier. However, the PTQAMBC has in addition, the role (s) of the Baptist denomination herself, in curbing the purported adolescent movement.

Both questionnaires followed a 5-point Likert Scale format, ranging from 'Strongly Agree, Agree, disagree, Strongly Disagree and Not Sure', scaled 5, 4, 3, 2,1, respectively.

For the purposes of introducing the researcher and providing clear explanations on the purpose of the questionnaires, an introductory letter was prepared and attached to the research instrument.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument for this research was validated through content validation system. Hence, issues and questions as raised in the reviewed literatures on Adolescent migration and its implications for Christian education, especially as it applied to the sample. The instrument was further validated by the researcher's colleague, who vetted them. The instrument also had a high level of reliability, giving a coefficient of about 0.79.

3.7 Analysis of Data

Data obtained for this study was analyzed with descriptive statistics and simple percentiles based on the frequency of occurrence of the responses to each item. This was then presented on tables to give visual expression, and clear explanations. A separate analysis and presentation of each set of questionnaires, was also done.

3.8 Research Questions

The following research questions were used to achieve the above stated purposes
1. Are adolescents moving away from Baptist churches in large numbers?
2. Where are the adolescents migrating to?
3. Are there causative factors for migrating from Baptist churches?

Table 1: Are adolescents leaving Baptist Churches?

SN		Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)
1	Adolescents are leaving Baptist Churches today	29.3	57.3	8.5	2.4	2.4
2	If many adolescents have their way, they would rather worship elsewhere other than the	25.6	56.1	12.2	1.2	2.4
3	Baptist Church Some that are leaving prefer Baptist denomination; It's just their local church they hate.	13.4	36.6	30.5	10.9	4.9

Source: Field work, 2016

Table 1above, sought to find out whether adolescents are moving away from the Baptist church or not; and if they are not, what the basis of their staying is. It thus indicates that 86.6% of the respondents believe that Adolescents are leaving Baptist Churches today. 81.7% believe that most adolescents prefer to worship elsewhere other than the Baptist Church (if allowed).While 50% believe

some of the adolescents that are leaving, actually prefer the Baptist denomination, and it is simply their local church they do not like, 41.47% do not agree.

The result thus shows that some adolescents are leaving the Baptist churches for somewhere else. Also, it indicates that many adolescents only worship in a Baptist church because their parents are Baptists. The table thus answers the first research question, which states, "Are adolescents moving away from the Baptist church in a significant dimension?"

Table 2: Where are they moving to?

SN	Those who are migrating from Baptist churches, are leaving for:	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)
1	Some other preferred Baptist Churches.	4.88	29.27	40.24	10.98	7.32
2	Some charismatic Churches they prefer	31.71	51.22	7.32	-	4.88
3	No church in particular, they rather stay home	1.22	10.98	36.59	29.27	13.41

Source: Field work, 2016

Table 2 presents the results of where adolescents, who are leaving Baptist churches, are leaving for. It suggests that 51.22% of adolescents do not prefer other Baptist churches against 34.15% who prefer some other Baptist churches. Meanwhile 82.93% of the respondents argued that adolescents prefer other charismatic churches. 65.86% however do not believe that some of the adolescents leaving would rather stay at home, than find a place to worship.

These results largely indicate that Baptist' adolescents are migrating to more charismatic churches than other Baptist churches, thereby answering the second research question which states "Where are they migrating to?"

Table 3: Causal factors for migrating from the Baptist Churches

SN	Adolescents move from Baptist churches because	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)
1	Issues that are pertinent to them are not discussed enough	21.95	50.00	18.29	1.22	4.88
2	They want an atmosphere of lively worship and quality music	60.98	32.93	2.44	-	-
3	They don't really want to worship God in the first place, hence prefer a place where they will be told what they want to hear	18.29	25.61	30.49	13.41	7.32
4	They want a place where spiritual truth is taught creatively	19.51	45.12	19.51	7.32	3.66
5	They want an atmosphere of care, love and understanding which they lack in their local church	34.15	45.12	10.98	3.66	2.44
6	They are not allowed to express themselves, as they really want to	20.73	51.22	13.41	4.88	3.66
7	People look down on them and don't see good in them	13.41	26.83	41.46	9.76	4.88
8	Adults do everything and hardly allow them to take some responsibilities	12.20	42.68	31.71	7.32	2.44
9	They are hardly carried along in sermons and other activities of the church	7.32	50.00	28.05	7.32	3.66
10	They simply want a place where they can indulge in their sinful practices.	12.20	28.05	28.05	19.51	8.54

Source: Field work, 2016

Table 3 sought to find out the reasons for the purported adolescent migration from Baptist churches. It indicates that 71.95% of the respondents argue that issues that are pertinent to adolescents are not discussed enough in Baptist churches. 92.91% desire an atmosphere of lively worship and :

quality music. However,while 43.90% believe adolescents want a place where they would be told what they want to hear,43.90% didn't agree with this believe. 64.63% argue that adolescents want a place where spiritual truth is taught creatively. 71.95% believe adolescents are not allowed to express themselves, as they really want to.

Also, 51.22% of the respondents say that people look down on adolescents and do not see good in them against 40.24% who are opposing the idea. 54.88% believe adults do everything and hardly allow them to take some responsibilities as opposed by 39.03%. Also, 57.32% indicate that adolescents are hardly carried along in sermons and other activities of the church which 35.37% negate the idea. 40.25% indicate they simply want a place where they can indulge in their sinful practices while 47.56 disapprove the idea.

These results indicate therefore, that adolescents are leaving the Baptist church in Nigeria, because they do not find the church providing what they want. They do not find lively worship and quality music; they are not taught spiritual truth creatively; they lack freedom of expression; are not assigned responsibilities; the sermons are not adolescent- centred. Furthermore, issues relating to them are not discussed enough and adolescent-engaging activities are hardly introduced. All of these answer the third research question, "Are there causative factors for adolescent migration from Baptist churches?"

Apart from these however, other reasons were indicated in the open ended section of the instrument and in sum, they include dissatisfaction with style and monotony of worship; search for search for a place to express their abilities, gifts and talents, without fear of stigmatisation and condemnation; search for a place where the truth of scriptures, can be well related to their world, needs and interests; a search for a place where they have a sense of belonging by being assigned responsibilities that task their initiatives and skilfulness; the search for creative Bible teachings and sermons, presented with varied methodologies and media and a place where they find answers to their questions about life, the Bible and God; among others.

4. Discussion

Findings from this research indicate that all categories of respondents believe that adolescents are migrating from the Baptist church at an alarming rate. This result agrees with scholars such as Awoyemi (1999) and Aiyegboyin&Nihinlola (2008). To the latter, "The exodus of Baptists to Pentecostal churches is a matter of grave concern to the Nigeria Baptist Convention (NBC)" because it shows that the purported migration is no news to the denomination. The question of what is being done to forestall the situation remains a question for further research.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the direction of movement of the adolescents, is largely to charismatic/ Pentecostal Churches and then to other Baptist churches, with Pentecostal approaches to ministry. This finding corroborates that of Ajeigbe (2002) and Aiyegboyin&Nihinlola (2008), who observed that some Baptist adolescents changed complete membership to some Pentecostal Churches; while some others, "left en masse to establish what they call 'Baptist Pentecostal Churches'." Similar to this, the adult respondents in this study are of the opinion that, adolescents prefer other churches and those still within simply worship there because of their parents. While these positions may thus suggest that Baptist adolescents hate their denomination, the adolescents in this study do not necessarily believe so, as they claim that even when they find themselves in other locations outside their homes, their first choice remains the Baptist, this is as long as they find the atmosphere, suiting the kind of worship experience they desire.

The foregoing suggests that Baptist adolescents possibly like their denomination and may not mind to stay, but their preferences and attractions to other worship places outwit the commitment to stay and this may be based on peer influence. Furthermore, the reasons for adolescent migration identified from this study show a people who know what they want and are willing to migrate to where they can find it. It also suggests that the young folks have a desire for God, but cannot deny their developmental cravings as well as the desires of the modern times in which they find themselves.

Put in another form, the Baptist Church in Nigeria is not a bad church. As a matter of fact, the fact that her adolescents are migrating to other churches and not necessarily becoming churchless, confirm the impact of the various efforts of the church from cradle through her age-graded scriptural teaching platforms, to build godly individuals. The problem may then be that over the years, the church may have held on to her conservativeness (Collins &Ishola (1995) and traditional ways of doing things i.e. traditional style of worship, methods of teaching, and so on. Thereby taking for granted the fact that, adolescents may not appreciate monotony, stereotypes and traditional organized religion (Cnaan et. al. 2004).They will therefore almost naturally gravitate towards those worship centres that appeal more to their 21st century realities.

The challenge therefore is will the Baptist denomination allow this to linger and for how long? While it may be impossible to completely stop migration since humans are mobile entities, movement of adolescents of the Baptist church to other churches in Nigeria, can be greatly reduced, so that the richness of the Baptist heritage can be fostered. A reduced movement will also enhance continuity, succession, growth and development as well as the advancement of the Great Commission.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that Baptist churches need her adolescents and the adolescents also need the church. The movement rate is too high to ignore, especially in thisperverse times.

The church, through her Christian educators should seize pragmatic approaches in an atmosphere of love, care and understanding, coupled with innovative and creative teaching methods, to not only bring her adolescents back, but also retain them

6. Recommendations

The following are recommended to assist the Baptist Church sustain and retain her adolescents.

The Nigerian Baptist convention should adopt separate worship centresfor teenagers and youths of all member- Baptist churches.A teens/youth minister should be employed to help cater for the needs of adolescentsin churches.The youth minister should be provided with all the resources needed to work, effectively.

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